



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

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12 students named Presidential Scholar semifinalists for Wisconsin

Program is one of the nation's highest honors for high school students

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster commended 12 graduating high school seniors for being named semifinalists in the 2008 Presidential Scholars program.

“Devotion to academic and artistic excellence, leadership in extracurricular activities, and service to community are traits that mark these Presidential Scholar semifinalists as exemplary graduates,” Burmaster said. “They are deserving of recognition and praise for their personal efforts and as representatives of the many high achieving students in our state and nation.”

The Presidential Scholars program was established in 1964 to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished high school students. The state's 12 semifinalists are among approximately 560 semifinalists for the 2008 Presidential Scholars program. Wisconsin's Presidential Scholar semifinalists are

- Adam J. Barron, Case High School, Racine;
- Adam G. Blodgett of Waukesha, Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, Mich.;
- Kacey R. Hauk of River Falls, St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, St. Paul, Minn.;
- Reuben F. Henriques, West High School, Madison;
- Brian W. Ji, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Lisa R. Koenig of River Hills, University School of Milwaukee;
- Evan E. Mast, Menomonee Falls High School;
- Laurel A. Ohm, West High School, Madison;
- Theresa S. Ryckman, West High School, Appleton;
- Travis J. Serebin, Germantown High School;
- Spencer D. Stroebe III of Saukville, Cedarburg Senior High School; and
- Angela M. Zeng of Menomonee Falls, Hamilton High School, Sussex.

(more)

Most students are identified for the Presidential Scholars program based on exceptional performance on the ACT or SAT college admissions tests. Blodgett and Hauk are among students nominated through their participation in the Arts Recognition and Talent Search program, sponsored by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts.

From nearly 2.8 million graduating high school seniors, approximately 3,000 students were identified as candidates for the program and invited to complete application materials that include essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. An independent, national committee of educators convened by the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews application materials to select semifinalists.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars will make the final selection of the nation's 121 academic Presidential Scholars—one male and one female from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. In addition, up to 15 students may be chosen at large. The Presidential Scholars Commission also chooses up to 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts for a total of up to 141 Presidential Scholars.

Students chosen as Presidential Scholars travel to Washington, D.C., in June, where they will meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, and scientists. They also will receive a Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House. Scholars are asked to identify one teacher who was most influential in their education. The teacher also is invited to the nation's capital for National Recognition Week and receives the Presidential Scholars program Teacher Recognition Award.

"The Presidential Scholars program is one of our nation's highest honors for graduating seniors," Burmaster said. "The accomplishments of these students in their academic and artistic studies, as leaders and as involved members of their school and community provide a foundation for success in our 21st century global society."

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